

Message Text

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SUBJ: RESUMPTION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN
BOLIVIA AND CHILE

REF: LA PAZ 0882

1. RENEWAL OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN CHILE AND BOLIVIA, AGREED UPON AT BANZER-PINOCHET SUMMIT MEETING AT CHARANA ON FEBRUARY 8, RECEIVED TEPID REACTION IN LA PAZ MORNING PRESS OF FEBRUARY 10. ALTHOUGH IT IS TOO EARLY TO GAUGE REACTION OF INFORMED POLITICAL OBSERVERS TO THIS DEVELOPMENT, LESS THAN ENTHUSIASTIC PRESS EDITORIALS WOULD SEEM TO SHOW THE WAY FOR SUBSEQUENT POPULAR VIEWS ON CHARANA.

2. SEMI-OFFICIAL MORNING DAILY "HOY" SEEKS TO JUSTIFY RESUMPTION OF DIPLOMATIC TIES BY ALLEGING NEED FOR A "PRACTICAL POLITICS" APPROACH TO BILATERAL PROBLEMS BETWEEN CHILE AND BOLIVIA. "HOY" EDITORIAL CONTINUES BY NOTING, HOWEVER, THAT CHARANA AGREEMENT IS ONLY USEFUL TO THE EXTENT THAT GENERALIZED UNDERSTANDINGS

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ACHIEVED THERE ARE FULFILLED THROUGH MORE SUBSTANTIVE

AGREEMENTS. IN THIS REGARD, NEWSPAPER HINTS THAT CHILE CAN COUNT ON OBTAINING NEEDED RAW MATERIALS FROM BOLIVIA ONLY IF IT IS WILLING TO SATISFY LATTER'S DESIRE FOR OUTLET TO THE SEA.

3. INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER "EL DIARIO" AND CHURCH-RELATED "PRESENCIA" ARE MUCH MORE CRITICAL OF RESULTS OF BANZER-PINOCHET MEETING. "EL DIARIO" NOTES THAT "WE HAD EXPECTED SOMETHING MORE" THAN MEAGER SUBSTANTIVE RESULT OF MEETING, AND CREDITS PINOCHET WITH ACHIEVING A DIPLOMATIC TRIUMPH IN VIEW OF CHILE'S CURRENT ISOLATION WITHIN THE HEMISPHERE. "PRESENCIA" CONCLUDES FORTHRIGHTLY THAT RESUPTION OF DIPLOMATIC TIES "IS NOT JUSTIFIED AT PRESENT" AND THAT BOLIVIA WILL LOSE MORE THAN IT GAINS BY THIS STEP. SPECIFICALLY, ITS EDITORIAL ALLEGES THAT BOLIVIA HAS GIVEN UP ONE OF ITS MOST EFFECTIVE WEAPONS FOR PUTTING PRESSURE ON CHILE TO RESOLVE EXISTING DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, WHILE GAINING NO CONCRETE ADVANTAGE IN RETURN. EDITORIAL CORRECTLY NOTES THAT WHILE DECLARATION OF CHARANA MAKES VAGUE REFERENCE TO "DECLARATION OF AYACUCHO", IT CONTAINS NO REMEDIAL MEASURES FOR DISADVANTAGEOUS BOLIVIAN LANDLOCKED SITUATION DESCRIBED IN THAT DECLARATION. DESPITE THEIR CRITICISMS, HOWEVER, BOTH "EL DIARIO" AND PRESENCIA" EXPRESS WILLINGNESS TO AWAIT FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN BOLIVIAN-CHILEAN BILATERAL RELATIONS, IN HOPE THAT SOME POSITIVE ADVANTAGE TO BOLIVIA WILL BE DERIVED FROM EXPANSION OF CONSULAR-LEVEL TIES WHICH THEY HAD MAINTAINED FOR PAST THIRTEEN YEARS.

4. COMMENT: RESUMPTION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN BOLIVIA AND CHILE CAN BE SEEN, IN FOREIGN POLICY TERMS, AS POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TOWARD LESSENING OF TENSIONS IN THIS REGION. AT THE LEAST, THIS NORMALIZATION OF DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS BETWEEN LA PAZ AND SANTIAGO SHOULD ENABLE THE TWO CUNTRIES TO WORK MORE EFFECTIVELY TOGETHER TOWARD RESOLVING THEIR CONTINUING BILATERAL DIFFERENCES. PARADOXICALLY, HOWEVER, CHARANA ACCORD COULD HAVE DESTABILIZING EFFECT IN TERMS OF PRESIDENT BANZER'S LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DOMESTIC POLITICAL POSITION. NON-OFFICIAL PRESS REACTION TO DATE IS UNUSALLY OUTSPOKEN, IN VIEW OF RESTRAINING GUIDELINES UNDER WHICH NEWSPAPERS HAVE OPERATED SINCE "NEW ORDER" WAS ANNOUNCED IN NOVEMBER 1974; IT MAY BE EXPECTED THAT INFORMED POLITICAL OPINION WILL BE EVEN MORE OUTSPOKEN, TO THE EXTENT THAT IT DISSENTS FROM COURSE OF ACTION ADOPTED BY BANZER AT CHARANA. MOST IMPORTANT FOR BANZER'S FUTURE WILL BE OPINION OF

CHARANA ACCORD TAKEN BY KEY MILITARY OFFICERS HOLDING
TROOP COMMANDS; IF MAJORITY OF THESE OFFICERS EVENTUALLY
ADOPTS VIEW THAT RESTORATION OF DIPLOMATIC TIES WAS A
"SELL-OUT" OF BOLIVIA'S NATIONAL INTERESTS, BANZER'S KEY
BASE OF SUPPORT WITHIN MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT WOULD BE
THREATENED.
STEDMAN

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